

Sawyer County Gazette

Obey Secures Federal Funds For Dental Services In NW Wisconsin
Appropriations Measure Includes Over \$200,000 For CESA 11 Dental Services

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Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced recently that the FY08 Omnibus Appropriation Bill includes \$215,277 that he requested to help CESA 11's Rural Health Dental Clinic program continue to provide dental care to residents of northwest Wisconsin.

"We're facing a 'silent epidemic' of oral disease in this country because of a lack of available dental care, especially in rural areas and for the most vulnerable among us. Children have died because of infections brought on by the absence of dental services," Obey said. "That's why we've made improving access to dental care a priority in the budget, and why community-based dental health centers, like those run by CESA 11, are so important. They help provide affordable dental care to thousands of rural Northwestern Wisconsin residents who would otherwise find it difficult or impossible to reach a dentist they could afford."

The Rural Health Dental Clinic program provides preventative dental hygiene, restorative dental services (including dentures), and oral health education to low-income, disabled, and nursing home patients in Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Iron, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Sawyer, St. Croix, and Washburn Counties through dental clinics in Hayward, Menomonie, and Turtle Lake, as well as through mobile outreach sites. With two full-time dentists, two part-time dentists, three full-time hygienists, and nine dental support staff, the clinics saw over 12,000 patients last year.